



# *The Messenger*

*News about our church,  
our ministries and our people*

*February 2015*

*Living Waters Lutheran Church and Preschool*



Mark your calendar now to attend and support these Living Waters activities. Details for February dates appear elsewhere in the newsletter.

- ◆ Feb. 18: Ash Wednesday Service
- ◆ Feb. 25: Mid-week Lenten Service
- ◆ March 14: Spring Clean-up Day
- ◆ March 22: Fellowship Dinner at church with Michael Hirst entertaining
- ◆ March 28: Make Palm Crosses

## **Welcome Back to The Limburgs**

Once again, it is our pleasure to have Pastor Jim and Martha Limburg as our Guest Pastor family. This year, they will be with us from February through April. Pastor Limburg will be leading the Bible study on Wednesday evenings and our mid-week services on Wednesday evenings during Lent.

We look forward to having you with us.

## **Making a Difference with Coffee and Chocolate**

From Diane Shiell

*This message is from  
Lutheran World Relief  
and the Lutheran World  
Relief Coffee Project, to  
**all who love making a  
difference!***



It was a big year for small farmers. In 2014, we accomplished so much together.....From traveling the world to build relationships.....to encouraging innovation at the farm level.....to taste testing ingredients for the best quality.....to supporting farmers in making their communities stronger.....we couldn't do it without you. Your support makes it all possible.

Last year, the LWR chocolate products used over one million pounds of organic, fairly traded cocoa beans and 500,000 pounds of organic, fairly traded sugar from small-scale farmers. And customers brewed, shared and enjoyed over 5.5 million pounds of coffee from small farmer co-ops. That is a remarkable, incredible positive impact in the world of authentic Fair Trade.

Thank you, to members of Living Waters for supporting small farmers and Fair Trade.

# From the Pastor

By: Pastor Dell Shiell

*"I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from?  
My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth!"*  
(Psalm 121:1-2)



Thank you, for keeping me in your prayers—and for your support—during my week in Haiti for the Deacon Training event with the Lutheran Church of Haiti. This trip was a momentous experience—humbling and inspirational, as I got to know Christians, eager to follow Jesus and to share the love of Jesus with others in “the poorest country in the Americas” (the term for Haiti, coined by the World Bank).

The theme for our week in Haiti was “Suffering.” We spent time with the Bible and in small group discussions where people shared their stories of God’s amazing power and love during their times of suffering. As I said, it was all very humbling and very encouraging.

Often I was reminded how important it is to be aware of the things we say to others who suffer. It is easy to add to their hurt and despair by dismissing their suffering with glib and callous remarks.

“Feeling down? Look up (to Jesus).” Is this glib and callous? Maybe. It all depends. It is easy for this to sound more like an admonition than a word of encouragement. Most often, an admonition adds to—it doesn’t take away from—our burdens.

How different is what we get in Psalm 121!

Here we do not have lofty words voiced by someone “standing on the outside, looking in.” Rather, we hear the personal witness of someone who is in need. “I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from?”

When I feel down, I am thankful that my faith or someone else’s personal witness urges me to look up—for the help I need. That’s very different from hearing someone—standing safely at a distance from my suffering—tell me what’s what and what I should do about it.

Someone who shares how God met them in the midst of their trauma and helped them get through it, may have something to say that I need to hear. I imagine it’s like that for you too.

That is why Jesus is such a special friend. He knows what it’s like to feel forsaken by God and to be rejected by people who should have known better. When I imagine the words, “*My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth!*” coming from Jesus’ lips, I am persuaded that God really does care about me—that God wants only what is best for me. I pray that may be the case for you, too.

*In Christ,  
Pastor Dell*



## Healing Service – 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday

*“Are you hurting? Pray. Do you feel great? Sing. Are you sick? Call the church leaders together to pray and anoint you with oil in the name of the Master.”*

James 5:13-14 (The Message)

At 11:00 am, on the third Wednesday of each month, we have a Service of Prayer for Healing at the church (With Anointing of Oil and Home Communion). This is for all in need of healing—of body, soul, and mind. Join us. You are welcome.

## Lenten Services Begin with Ash Wednesday February 18, 7:00pm



Be certain to join your fellow Christians as we begin what is often referred to as the “journey” through Lent with Easter as the destination. One of the most solemn services of the church year, the service includes the imposition of ashes and holy communion. You will find additional details about this service and the following Wednesday evening Lenten services on pages 8 and 9 of this newsletter. Do come.

## Thank Offering Sunday Is February 1

By Gayle Backiel

February 1 is Thank Offering Sunday. The worship emphasizes the leadership role of women. Pastor Dell will preach the sermon and Fields of Grace will provide special music. The Thank Offering service gives us a special chance to thank God for his many mercies and to thank the congregation for your support.

On this day, the women of the church are displaying some of the quilts they made this past year. You can see prayer shawls and baby afghans too. The quilts will be given to Lutheran world relief or local people in need. The shawls will be given to people in need of prayers or healing and the baby caps and

afghans will be given to a local hospital for new born babies.

That is the most visible part of what the women of the ELCA do. We also have Bible Studies, prepare and serve meals after a funeral, leadership training and gatherings with women from other Lutheran churches.

We have a very active group of women at Living Waters. President, Gayle Backiel, Vice President, Char DeWitt, Secretary, Karen Hoepfner, and Treasurer, Sheri Moehling are the officers. We encourage all the women of the church to get involved in one of our many small groups or circles.

This is the day that we ask the congregation to help with the work of the Women of the church by your prayers and donations.

Thank you for your generous support.

## SENIORS CONNECTING TO JOY

By Evelyn Mueller, Director, A Special Time

There are many things to celebrate about aging. Like a fine wine, aging can help us mellow, grow deeper and richer, and develop our tastes for appreciating the finer things in life. Slowing down allows us to pause, breathe, and embrace the joy that is inherent in life. Recent research suggests that many adults are happier and better adjusted in their senior years than when they were younger. Freedom from work, raising children, and the responsibilities of the middle years allow seniors to enjoy the good life and find space to be who they are. Issues of low self-esteem and lack of confidence often fade away as we age, and wisdom invites us to celebrate our true nature of peace, patience, compassion, forgiveness, and joy.

Some studies suggest that people who find the good in situations, even tragedies, are happier and better adjusted than those who see only the negative aspects of daily living. This advice also applies to aging. Pain, injuries, and illness may hinder one's ability to do certain activities, but maintaining a positive attitude and exploring humor allows one to continue to embrace the joys of living. Famed dramatist George Bernard Shaw wrote: **"We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing."**

Cultivating and maintaining a sense of humor aids in aging gracefully. Laughing at oneself and the world and not taking things too seriously can protect one from the normal stresses of life. Laughter is a great healing agent and can also protect one from

depression. "Laugh your troubles away" is sound advice! Seniors often say that as you grow older, you have to focus on what you can do rather than what you can't do. What a great example of a positive attitude! Life may bring regrets, but dwelling on the past and what could have been will only lead to attachment to what might have been. It is better to focus on today and embrace the joy that life brings.

The poet W.H. Auden wrote: **"In times of joy, all of us wished we possessed a tail we could wag."** Joy is defined as a feeling of happiness, and when we look at research on happiness, we discover a myriad of health benefits including less stress and depression, stronger immune systems, lower heart rates, increased blood flow, and longer lives.

A landmark study involving nuns showed the health benefits that come with positive emotion. (The studies among nuns showed health benefits and longevity because they are in a controlled environment.)

Stay tuned in March on how to connect with joy and find your "wag."



### Wag Your Tail

## A Special Message from The Olsens

Dear “new” friends at Living Waters,

LouAnn and I have been blessed beyond our wildest imagination during our three months at Living Waters! Oh, the winter weather was pretty decent, but warmer still was your hospitality. Pastor Dell and Diane were most gracious in welcoming us and integrating us into the life of the congregation. Judy Johnson is a well-grounded and talented musician who faithfully adds sparkle to our Sunday morning worship. And the Beerbower House (the condo at Sabal Trace) was comfortable and convenient.

Perhaps we were most touched to learn about and experience the unique outreach ministry that happens every Friday: *A Special Time*. We joined the choir and tried to add our voices to the praises of the congregation. On Wednesday evening, I led a Bible Study with folks who love the Lord and love the Word, and really care about learn-

ing and sharing. The teacher is often the one who learns the most, and that happened almost every Wednesday night.

As upper-mid-west Lutherans, we have lived an insular life. We knew of fellow Lutherans in the north-eastern states, but it has taken coming to south Florida to discover the rest of our Lutheran kin. Some of your accents are still a puzzle and delight, but your sense of church is mature and your outlook on life and faith is a whole lot less parochial than what we are used to. Bless you all in your (and our) journey of faith.

For friends who have become like family, we give thanks. For faithful Christians reaching out to care for others in countless ways, we give thanks. For a congregation which is triply committed to the fuller expression of the faith, we give thanks. And for all that Florida has come to mean for us, we give thanks.

*Pastor Joel and LouAnn Olsen*

Editor’s note: As Pastor Dell announced at the February 25 services, the Olsens will be back with us for an entire year starting September 2015 as we begin a transition in the Guest Pastor program. We wish them safe travels and look forward to their return.

## Report on the Annual Meeting of the Congregation

By Scott Hanson, Council President

Thank You to everyone who attended the Congregational Annual Meeting on January 25. We reviewed and approved the individual council reports for 2014. In addition, we discussed the 2015 Budget. The council put forth an aggressive plan to meet our **objectives**, establish and commit to attainable **goals** and worked with the Long Range

Planning Committee on future **dreams**! The budget passed unanimously.

Again I would like to say *Thank You* to the council for their dedicated service to Living Waters. I encourage everyone to participate and share their time and talents as we continue to grow our congregation.



LAKE SUMTER  
Children's Advocacy Center

*Working with You to  
stop child abuse*

## **Here's a Way to Help Abused Children in Florida**

By Sheri Moehling

*Our Mission:* "To provide a child- friendly, community based facility where a child victim can be safely interviewed, provided with crisis counseling, receive medical exams, and long-term specialized therapy, when needed.

The **Women of ELCA** has adopted the Lake Sumter Children's Advocacy Center as the recipient of our 2015-2017 "LOVE OFFERING." We heard an inspiring narrative of the center's activities and goals during our Fall Gathering in 2014. The director of counseling, Diane Piszczek, joined us at our leadership meeting in Leesburg and shared more information about the center.

Incorporated in 1997, the Lake Sumter Children's Advocacy Center is the culmination of the community's volunteers and agency professionals working together to provide child abuse victims with all necessary services in a single location.

Diane has suggested the following in-kind gifts. These can be collected during the year and presented to the individuals attending the Fall Gathering in November 2015.

- Art supplies for children (used for Art Therapy)
- Stuffed toys or Beanie Babies (used for Play Therapy)
- \$5 Fast Food gift cards (some interviews take many hours)
- Gift cards from Walmart, Publix, or generic (used for maintenance needs, drinks & snacks, office needs, etc.)
- Blankets or quilts for children - babies to teens (a blanket is given with each medical exam)

Contact Sheri Moehling, FL/BA SWO Board Member at 941-429-1225 or email me for more information at [sheri722@comcast.net](mailto:sheri722@comcast.net) Love Offering Coordinator

# From Here To Eternity

*Think of Your Church Like  
One of Your Children*

By Pastor Shiell

Many years ago, I remember hearing a woman financial advisor tell a group of charitable estate planners that when she does estate planning with her clients she encourages them to think of their favorite church or charity as one of their children. She'd say, "So, if you have two children, why not divide your estate three ways—giving a third to each of your children and a third as your charitable legacy?" The thought was so novel, it really caught me off-guard—and obviously I still remember it!

As a pastor, I have encouraged Christians to strive to tithe. In other words, I encouraged others to make it a personal goal to give at least 10% of your income to support Christian mission and ministry. Since most Christians do not tithe, I encourage people to set this as goal—and then figure out what percentage of their income they are currently giving and increase this by 1% a year, until they reach the goal of 10%. Thankfully, some of those attending churches I've served were already tithing. And, thankfully, others caught the idea and began the process of striving to reach the level of a tithe in their giving.

But, now, I realize it's time to encourage Christians to make plans to leave a legacy of a tithe (at least 10% ) of their worldly assets in their estate plan to benefit the Christian cause. Of course, to take the novel approach of the woman who advises her clients to give an equal percentage to church and charity as they give to their children goes beyond the tithe for most of us.

Surprisingly, though, the real challenge isn't to get people to think of their church as one of their children or to give the church a tithe, as part of their estate plan. The real challenge is to get people to put together an estate plan and to make sure they keep their plan up to date. In other words, it's a big challenge to get people to write a will, to draft trust documents, and to review the beneficiaries of their IRA and life insurance policy—let alone to get people to make the effort to include Living Waters in their plan.

What about it? Do you have an estate plan in place? Is it up to date? Did you include Living Waters in your plan? If so, thank you. If not, would you please do so, before it is too late? I know you love this church. I know you are proud of the ministry that takes place at Living Waters. Please include Living Waters in your estate plan.



## Living Waters Legacy Certificate

Receive \$100 (Single) or \$150 (Couple)  
Toward Attorney's Fee when you name  
Lutheran Church of the Living Waters  
or the Living Waters Fund in your will.  
Payable To Attorney when invoice presented to:  
Living Waters Lutheran Church, PO Box 8064,  
North Port, Florida 34290

Expires: June 1, 2015

[LivingWatersLutheran.com](http://LivingWatersLutheran.com)

## Let's Have Dinner!

By Gayle Backiel

I am excited to tell you about a new fellowship opportunity at Living Waters. Beginning in February we are going to have Friendship Dinners. This is a function where five to eight people get together once a month in a member's home for a meal.

We have five families who have agreed to host a meal in February. They are listed below with the area where they live.

Paul & Barb Cartwright  
Port Charlotte near Midway 743-4770

Dolores Nyblad  
Chancellor near church 743-6613

Debbie & Dennis Stankiewicz  
Off Salford near 41 426-9173

John & Bonnie Jenson  
Sabal Trace 426-1820

Rick & Gayle Backiel  
Price near Cranberry 423-6609



The host family will decide on a theme for the evening and prepare a main dish. They will call the people who signed up on their sign-up sheet and explain what they would like to have you bring. You can decide when you are together for your first meal who will host the next gatherings in March and April. This will be a fun way to meet and get to know other people in the congregation. The addresses of the hosts are on the sign-up sheets so you can find someone who lives near you. Be sure to include your name and phone number when you sign up.

If you have any questions or if you would like to be a host for the first time around, call Gayle Backiel at 423-6609.

### **Worship and Bible Study Themes During Lent 2015**

Beginning 7:00 pm, Wednesday, February 4, 2015, Pastor Jim Limburg will begin teaching a 9-part Bible study series based on Exodus 1-20: **Free at Last— Now What Do We Do?"**

The first two sessions will be hour-long Bible studies.

The Bible study series will continue as 15-20 minute segments in our Lenten Midweek Worship—also, 7:00 pm, on Wednesday evenings. More about this on page 9.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2015. There will be a service with Holy Communion at 7:00 pm. The Lenten Midweek Wednesday evening services will continue up to Palm Sunday. During Holy Week, there will be services on Thursday and Friday.

Beginning the First Sunday in Lent, February 22, 2015, Pastor Dell Shiell will begin a Sunday sermon series,

#### **"About Christian Character: Becoming Like Christ."**

Please take advantage of these opportunities to grow your faith during Bible study and worship throughout Lent 2015.

# Free at last! Now what do we do?

## A study of Exodus 1-20

By Dr. James Limburg

On the screen you see an unforgettable spectacle. There are rivers turning into blood, frogs climbing into bedrooms and crawling between the sheets, boils festering on people and animals and clouds of grasshoppers bringing darkness over the earth. I refer to the current film, *Exodus, Gods and Kings*, which outdoes Cecil B. DeMille's (1956) *The Ten Commandments* for downright scary effects. The movie tells the story of a people who had been slaves for 400 years and then are finally set free, only to face the sea ahead of them and hear the whirr of the chariot wheels behind them. What will happen next?



All of this swashbuckling, sword wielding and chariot chasing comes right out of the Bible, from the opening chapters of the Book of Exodus. But also in that book is a story about a people who find themselves “free at last!” and ready to start a new life. What should that new life look like?



This story about the event called the Exodus is the setting for a sermon attributed to God himself. It is an easy one to take notes on, because there are ten parts. These are the Ten Commandments and are still learned by Jewish and Christian children all over the world.

Jewish people will be retelling these stories during Passover time. Christians will tell the story about a New Exodus, a new setting free of people who have been enslaved. Join us at Living Waters Lutheran for a series on the Exodus and Commandments, entitled “Free at last! Now what do we do?” conducted by Dr. James Limburg, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Wednesdays 7:00pm, beginning February 4 as Bible Study.  
During Lent, same day and time, Mid-Week Lenten Services.

*On a personal note...*

## ***Happy Birthday***

Feb. 4 Linda Chubner  
Feb. 7 May Grigni  
Feb. 8 Ed Skelley  
Feb. 22 Connie Bliss  
Feb. 26 Nicole Reece  
Feb. 28 Joanne Bligh

***Farewell...***We bid farewell to **Ed DeMeritt**. Ed and his late wife, Barb, were active, long time members of Living Waters. Ed was with us on February 25 for one last visit along with his family as they prepare his house for selling and move him to be with them in Conesus, NY. We wish Ed God's choicest blessings and thank him for his many years of service to and support of Living Waters.

***The Messenger*** is published monthly by Living Waters Lutheran Church with printed copies usually distributed the first Sunday of each month. Copies are also available at: [www.LivingWatersLutheran.com](http://www.LivingWatersLutheran.com) and via email distribution.

To have information included in the newsletter, please write your content and send it to Judy Johnson, editor and publisher: [j3john@comcast.net](mailto:j3john@comcast.net). Articles must be submitted by the 21st of each month, unless otherwise specified, for publication the following month and may

## **Is Your Passion All About Organizing?**

We are seeking a detail-oriented, enthusiastic, highly organized project manager to lead the Preschool Golf Tournament Committee. Experience or knowledge of golf is helpful but not necessary. We have experienced people to assist you.

Your responsibilities would include: working with a team to identify and secure event sponsors, hole sponsors, and prize donations; oversee the lunch menu, coordinate event volunteers and event publicity, and work with golf course personnel to ensure a smooth tournament.

The tournament will be held on November 14, 2015 at the Port Charlotte Golf Club. This is the single largest annual fund raiser for our Preschool. Last year's tournament was a great success and your help is needed to repeat and surpass last year's event!

We need to have this position filled by March 1. Please contact Pastor Dell for more information. Thanks.

### **Physical Address**

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Port Charlotte, FL 33953

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**941-625-8090**

**[www.livingwaterslutheran.com](http://www.livingwaterslutheran.com)**

**Office Hours: 9:00am-Noon, Mon. - Thurs.**

If you have questions about our church, its ministries or about becoming a member, please contact Pastor Dell Shiell via email at: [pastor@livingwaterslutheran.com](mailto:pastor@livingwaterslutheran.com)